

Message Text

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67

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01

EB-11 COME-00 SCEM-02 INT-08 SCI-06 /193 W

----- 114828

R 281045Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1718

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DJKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1141

E.O. 11652: GDSJK

TAGS: PFOR MR

SUBJ: MAURITANIA: NEWEST ARAB LEAGUE MEMBER

REF: A) ALGIERS 2478; B) NOUAKCHOTT 1057; C) NOUAKCHOTT 1123
(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: MAURITANIA'S ADMISSION TO ARAB LEAGUE, ANNOUNCED
NOV 26 IN ALGIERS, HAS EARMARKS OF HAVING BEEN PUSHED BY OULD
DADDAH PERSONALLY. WHILE FONMIN VIGOUROUSLY DENIED RUMOR
IMPENDING MEMBERSHIP ONLY LAST MONTH INCREASING ARAB SUCCESS WITH
OIL WEAPON AND UPSWING IN ARAB/AFRICAN SOLIDARITY PROBABLY
APPEALED TO PRESIDENT AS IRRESISTIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN AT
SUMMIT, THEREBY WINNING MAXIMUM PUBLICITY. DISSATISFACTION OF
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THIS COUNTRY'S BLACK MINORITY WITH LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP WILL BE MANAGE-

ABLE. LEADERSHIP WILL, HOWEVER, NEED REDEFINE CORNER STONE OF GIRM FOREIGN POLICY WHICH WAS AVOIDANCE TOO CLOSE AN IDENTIFICATION WITH EITHER ARAB OR BLACK AFRICAN GROUPINGS.

2. NEWS OF GIRM MEMBERSHIP IN ARAB LEAGUE WAS PUBLISHED ON EVE OF 13TH ANNIVERSARY MAURITANIAN INDEPENDENCE NOV 27. ALTHOUGH MEMBERSHIP HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED IN ALGIERS NOV 26 (REF A), RADIO MAURITANIA DID NOT CARRY STORY FOR FURTHER 24 HOURS. BAREBONE PRESS TREATMENT HERE NOTED MAURITANIA'S ADMISSION TO LEAGUE HAD BEEN DECIDED AT SUMMIT CONFERENCE AND ANNOUNCED BY BOUMEDIENE; THERE WAS NO EDITORIAL WHICH NORMALLY ACCOMPANIES ANNOUNCEMENT OF IMPORTANT EVENTS. LACK OF LOCAL MEDIA REACTION PROBABLY BECAUSE PRESIDENT HIMSELF HAS YET TO SET GOVERNMENT LINE ON LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP. UNWILLINGNESS OF OTHERS IN LEADERSHIP TO GET OUT AHEAD OF PRESIDENT ILLUSTRATED BY FONMIN'S VIGOROUS DENIAL LAST MONTH OF RUMOR GIRM WAS SEEKING ENTRY INTO LEAGUE (RED B). SIMILARLY, ON NOV 26 ACTING PRESIDENT (MINISTER OF INTERIOR SALAH) WHILE AT EMBASSY DINNER AT VERY HOUR WHEN ALGIERS FIRST BROADCAST NEWS OF ADMISSION, SAID NOTHING TO US.

3. DECISION TO JOIN HAS THE EARMARKS OF BEING TAKEN ON PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL INITIATIVE. WHILE ADHERENCE TO ARAB CAUSE HAS BEEN CONSTANT OF GIRM FOREIGN POLICY, INTENSITY OF CONTACTS WITH ARAB STATES HAS ESCALATED DURING PAST TWO YEARS. OULD DADDAH HAS CULTIVATED IN PARTICULAR BILATERAL TIES WITH LIBYA, SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT WHILE DEEPENING THOSE WITH ALGERIA, FOR WHOSE LEADERSHIP HE FEELS SPECIAL AFFINITY. TO SPECULATE WHY MOVE TAKEN NOW, BELIEVE COMPARISON INSTRUCTIVE WITH OULD DADDAH'S DECISION EARLIER THIS YEAR TO BREAK WITH FRANC ZONE. WHILE THAT STEP LONG UNDER STUDY, ASSURANCES OF ARAB SUPPORT ALLOWED HIM SPEED UP TIMETABLE. IN LIKE MANNER, BELIEVE CATALYST OF RECENT ARAB DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS WITH THEIR "OIL WEAPON", TOGETHER WITH INCREASING SENSE OF INTER-ARAB AND AFRO-ARAB SOLIDARITY, GAVE DADDAH IRRESISTIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN BANDWAGON. ARAB SUMMIT PROVIDED IDEAL TIMING.

4. LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP MAY POSE PROBLEM VIS A VIS MAURITANIA'S BLACK MINORITY, ALREADY RESENTFUL OF PACE OF "ARABIZATION",
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BUT PRESIDENT HAS OBVIOUSLY DETERMINED THIS TO BE MANAGEABLE. HE CAN, BY WAY OF JUSTIFICATION TO THAT AUDIENCE, POINT TO SIGNIFICANT RECENT PLEDGES OF ARAB WORLD ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR MAURITANIA AND GOOD PROSPECTS IN FUTURE. NONETHELESS, LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP WOULD LOGICALLY SEEM REQUIRE REDEFINITION OF MAURITANIA'S ROLE AS BRIDGE BETWEEN BLACK AND ARAB AFRICA WHICH, HERETOFORE, HAS MEANT GIRM AVOIDING FULL IDENTIFICATION WITH EITHER GROUPING. THIS REDEFINITION ALSO, WE PREDICT, WILL

PROVE MANAGEABLE FOR A PRESIDENT WITH FRENCH LEGAL TRAINING.

5. OULD DADDAH BRINGS TO LEAGUE THE SKILLS DEVELOPED AS AFRICAN STATESMAN WITH 13 YEARS IN OFFICE. HIS INSTINCT IS NORMALLY TO PLAY A QUIET BACKGROUND ROLE SEEKING CONSENSUS. HE HAS NO ENEMIES AND ENTERS LEAGUE COUNCIL GENERALLY WELL KNOWN AND RESPECTED ON CONTINENT. TO HIS FELLOW LEAGUE MEMBERS HE CAN POINT WITH PRIDE TO HIS EFFORTS RALLY BLACK AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR ARAB CAUSE, INCLUDING FACT HIS FONMIN WAS IN ON KILL JUST PRIOR BREAK WITH ISRAEL BY BOTH IVORY COAST AND THE GAMBIA. WHILE HE WAS BY NO MEANS ALONE IN THESE LOBBYING EFFORTS, OULD DADDAH HAS MANAGED MAINTAIN HIMSELF IN FOREFRONT ON "LIBERATION" ISSUES AND ARAB/AFRICAN SOLIDARITY.

6. ON HIS RETURN HERE PRESIDENT WILL LIKELY STRESS THE NATURALNESS" OF THIS MOVE AS ALLOWING MAURITANIA TO PLAY A WIDER POLITICAL ROLE AND BETTER SUPPORT BOTH ARAB AND AFRICAN CAUSES. EARLIER THIS YEAR HE CLAIMED THAT SEVERANCE OF THE DEFENSE AND MONETARY ACCORDS WITH FRANCE HAD GIVEN HIS COUNTRY ITS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FREEDOM. WHAT MAY REMAIN UNARTICULATED ON THIS OCCASION, AND WE BELIEVE TO BE HIS GUT CONVICTION IS THAT LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP WILL FURTHER LIBERATE HIS COUNTRY'S ENERGIES BY REAFFIRMING ITS ETHNIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE.
MURPHY

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